

From Verbal-static to Visual-dynamic: a Perspective Shift in Studying the Structure of *Lun Yu*

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Abstract :

Starting off from Makeham's (2003) differentiation between historical meaning and scriptural meaning, Huang's (2011) citation of coherence theories and Xu's (2002; 2004a; 2004b) embodiment reading by rejecting Western logos, this paper takes a perspective shift from verbal-static to visual-dynamic to study the structure of *The Analects of Confucius*. While a sheer verbal-static reading of the *Lun Yu* is doomed to the extremities of either praising its structure into the heaven or damning it into the hell, and to the ambiguity to argue that its structure is neither very coherent nor quite chaotic, a new perspective from verbal-static to visual-dynamic might lead to a view that the compilers of the *Lun Yu* actually take a reverse thinking in compiling this historic classics by segmenting and quantifying. (McLuhan, 1962, 1964) Confucius' thoughts into bricks and tiles scattering here and there, which induces careful readers to reconstruct for themselves Confucius' systemic TEMPLE composed of key notion windmills centering round how to be a *Junzi* by constant recitation, visualization and interpretation based on Gestalt cognition principles of spontaneous similarity, proximity and continuation.

Key Words: Perspective shift, Reconstruction, Lun Yu, Segmentation, Quantification, Gestalt principles

1 INTRODUCTION

Various studies of *The Analects of Confucius (Lun Yu)*, to date, cover its politic-ethical meaning and significance, influences both at home and abroad, name origin, compiling, varieties of versions and structural analysis. Intriguingly enough, scholars tend to share the same opinion about *Lun Yu*'s great influence upon Asian(all the east Asia and part of south Asia) civilization while holding sharp discrepancies upon its structure.

With only more than ten thousands Chinese characters, namely, it shapes the history of Asian culture in ancient China as well as in Tokugawa Japan (1600-1867), Choson Korea(1392-1910)and Le-Nguyen Vietnam(1428-1883). (Makeham 2003:1)Academically, it "has functioned as a key point for reference for inquiry, debate, and conflict within the tradition of classical scholarship and for the political and social institutions that sought ideological grounding in this scholarship." (Makeham 2003:1) Institutionally, it is used widely and profoundly for at least seventeen generations of Chinese culture "as a prescribed text in the civil examination system, a manual of political and philosophical wisdom, a storehouse of esoteric teachings and moral precedents, a scripture for self-cultivation, a model of literary style, or child's primer." (Makeham 2003:1)

To date, contemporary Chinese leaders try their best to seek ideological concepts from *Lun Yu* to govern the state in terms of Jiang's(2000) "Governing the state in moral", Hu's(2006) "Eight Honors and Eight Shames" and Xi's(Liu & Peng,2014) " Loyalty and Filial Piety" and other twenty-four citations of *The Analects* from the year of 2013 to 2014.(Chen,2014)

In spite of the consensus discussed above, there are a lot of controversies over the structure of *Lun Yu* both at home and abroad. In terms of stands, there are mainly three types of arguments in which Makeham's (2003), Xu's (2002; 2004a; 2004b) and Huang's (2011) studies are quite inspirational to the author although all of them have their disadvantages.

The first type of verbal-static argument is that there is no specific reason why the entries and chapters are structured in such a casual and random way by which each entry and chapter are not necessarily relevant to each other. (Yang, 1999:25) According to Makeham(2003:1), without the fleshy annotations and commentaries by generations of Confucian scholars, *Lun Yu* would be a pile of textual "spare bones," thus, would be at most "a cryptic mixture of parochial injunctions and snatches of dry conversation." Namely, "[I]t is the commentaries that bring the text to life and lend it definition."

The second type of argument, based on an understanding deeper than the first, falls into the logical trap of overgeneralization and goes to the other extreme that the *Lun Yu* is semantically coherent and its editorial arrangement is logically clear and crystalized.(Tian, 2010:2) "Through a thorough reading of the *Lun Yu*, I came to be awakened by the orderly beauty of entries and chapters starting from *Xue Er* and ending with *Yao Yue*. All the twenty entries and chapters are perfectly compiled. "(Nan, 2007:9) Likewise, Bi(2010:64-66) rushes to a

conclusion that the editing is fantastic since the first chapter *Xue Er* deals with how to be a benevolent person by constant learning(*Nei Sheng*) and the last chapter *Yao Yue* tells the hearers how to reach the sublime stage *Wai Wang* of being a sage king like Emperor Yao who knows destination(*Zhi Ming*),rites(*Zhi Li*) and addressing(*Zhi Yan*).

The third type takes the middle way to argue that there are some disconnections between entries and chapters, but they are well-ordered in general. For Yao(2004: 95), the structure of *Lun Yu* is neither well-connected nor disorderly, which is illustrated by a careful arrangement of topics(*Ren*, *Li* and *Junzi*) ,speakers(Yanhui, Zigong and Zilu), the initiating Chapter *Xue Er* as the cardinal guide and the resolving Chapter *Yao Yue* for the whole book. Huang (2011: 88-95) claims that the whole book, globally, is coherent since it centers around *Ren*(benevolence),*Li*(rites) and *Junzi*(a superior man); and locally, there are no obvious semantic connections between entries and chapters or there might be some relevance that have not been discovered yet.

2 PROBLEMS AND APPROACHES

Methodologically, the studies discussed above fall into two types—logic and non-logic. The former is illustrated by Makeham's (2003) and Huang's (2011) and the latter is represented by Xu's (2002; 2004a; 2004b). All of them are both problematic and heuristic as follows.

Makeham's (2003:1) attributing *Lun Yu*'s life of thoughts to later generations' annotations and commentaries is groundless. First, the *Lun Yu* has its own prosperous school with so many disciples. Second, its descending development and prosperity are the genetic expression and mutation in the following generations, without which the commentaries and annotations would be rootless in that it's the ideological life of *Lun Yu* that gives birth to all the following attached textual or verbal interpretations while the latter, as off-springs, strengthen and prolong the former's life expectancy. Namely, the textual meaning (Ricouer, 1981:139) or historical meaning (Makeham, 2003:9) of *Lun Yu* is the mother of the classics' psychological meaning (Ricouer, 1981:139)or scriptural meaning (Makeham, 2003:10) of those commentaries and annotations. To borrow Makeham's (2003:6) own words, the conglomeration of original text and "additional contour" of commentaries sketches the profound "historical trajectory" on which the *Lun Yu* fixes the positions of key points such as *xiushen* (self-cultivation) including *ren*(benevolence), *zhi*(wisdom), *yong*(mettle), *li*(propriety),*zhong*(be true to one's inner heart and be loyal to the ruler), *shu*(put oneself into other's position), *yi*(sense of justice) and *junzi*(a superior man) and leave dozens of blanks for the later generations to fill in with various lines.

What is inspirational in Makeham's (2003) study, as far as this paper is concerned, is that he puts forwards a pair of notions of "historical meaning" and "scriptural meaning"(Makeham, 2003:10) based on Ricouer's (1981:139) "textual meaning" and "psychological meaning", in which the former pair is more targeted for the study of the *Lun Yu*. Hereafter, the author will employ Makeham's notions in the following discussions.

Compared with Makeham's (2003: 1) hasty degrading *The Analects* into a text of "spare bones" and "a cryptic mixture of parochial injunctions and snatches of dry conversation," Huang's (2011: 89-95) argument that understanding the structure of *Lunyu* must be based on relevant theories of coherence and cohesion (Halliday and Hason, 1976; Halliday, 1994: 339; Enkvist, 1978: 128) sounds much more rational and more theoretically heuristic, which is an essential step for scholars to understand the seemingly mystic structure of the *Lun Yu*. However, he is unable to go beyond the verbal level because he fails to notice that coherence is not only a matter of words but a matter of mental representation (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2008: 9) thus fails to notice that the *Lunyu* is not a linear textual structure but a diasporic yet coherent globe.

Xu (2002; 2004a; 2004b) takes a revolutionary step. He warns readers of traps of partiality, arbitrariness and dogmatic modeling with Western logic paradigm and puts forwards his own navigating approaches:

Suppose a reader refused to put these scattering statements into a set with comparison and contrast, analysis, above all, "pursuit of embodiment" to discover the inner connections and construct what he has read but persisted in partial judgment and Western deductive paradigm, he is sure to jump to a hasty conclusion on the complete life of the *Lun Yu* by a rough scanning one of its cross-entries. (Xu, 2002: 12-13)

Xu (2002:12-13) argues that *Lun Yu*'s well-designed structure cannot be understood in terms of Western logos but Chinese traditional intuitive life embodiment. For him, "various thoughts on human nature highlighted by the pre-Qin thinkers come from their own embodiment—the very original way to perceive the ontological truth of man and nature." (Xu, 2002: 409) That is, mastering the very nature of man originates from perception and understanding rather than from speculative concepts favored by most Western philosophers. For Confucius, to express his life embodiment with words in a plain way is to shape his deep thoughts. And for his whole life he teaches his disciples how to perceive and understand the nature of human being by more practices and by fewer words. When inevitable, he always tries to do it concisely and heuristically. (For details, see Yang, 2007: 497-532). Just because "[t]he rationality of Confucius' thoughts living in concrete lives rather than in formal logic" creates its cubic system (Xu, 2004 b:168) with hierarchies of Confucius' thoughts corresponding to those in concrete lives, (Xu, 2002:12-13) it would be almost senseless to speculate from the western logos the "ordinary greatness" of those indivisible humanized "quality nouns" (*Zhide mingci*) in *Lun Yu*. (Xu 2002:12; 2004 a: 189)

Xu's approaches, in the author's eyes, are both radical and instructive. By radical, it means that Xu's idea that Western logic paradigm is purely speculative is wrong since 1) all deductive concepts and notions, be it Western or Eastern, come from nowhere but embodimental cognition; 2) creative abduction, frequently applied in each entry of *The Analects* in which the statement(s) is/are told analogically, is not excluded from Western logic; 3) anyone's synthesis (comparison and contrast) and analysis cannot exclude deduction. Moreover, Xu misses the target when he lays more emphasis on readers' subjective intuition in daily practices rather than

on the objective structure of *Lun Yu*, which greatly weakens the explanatory adequacy of his argument. However, his method is really inspiring for scholars to take a shift from pure verbal logical perspective to an unconventional angle.

Melting all the methodological advantages of Makeham's (2003), Huang's (2011) Xu's (2002; 2004a; 2004b), the author puts forth a perspective shift from verbal-static to visual-dynamic to study *Lun Yu*'s structure. By verbal-static, it means that *The Analects* is a textual body calling for a thorough semantic and cohesive analysis of each entry; by visual-dynamic, it means that the whole book should be analyzed discursively based on McLuhan's (1962, 1964) media theories and Gestalt cognitive principles to observe how the compilers visually segment and quantify the *Lun Yu* into piles of bricks and tiles scattering here and there, and to discover how readers are inspired by such segmentations and quantifications to reconstruct the Master's great TEMPLE based on spontaneous similarity, proximity and continuation cognitive activities. Of course, such a shift does not deny the fundamental role of verbal reading in that the *Lun Yu* is, first, a written text.

3 THE LUN YU FROM VERBAL-STATIC AND VISUAL-DYNAMIC PERSPECTIVES

Various perspectives may lead to various observations. A sheer verbal-static perspective sees surface textual discontinuities such as irregular leaps of topics, disconnection of thematic arguments and pragmatic ambiguity due to lack of specific hearers, specific space and time, all of which leads to too many structural blanks. However, a visual-dynamic perspective will detect how the compilers of the *Lun Yu* adroitly segment and quantify Confucius' systemic thoughts into ideological bricks and tiles to inspire readers to reconstruct the TEMPLE in their own ways based on Gestalt cognitive principles. Namely, cautious readers might be able to construct a cognitive-philosophical architectural backbone of those ethical, social and political values, which survives and strengthens *Lun Yu* for two thousands years by offering more and more hermeneutic interpretations.

3.1 The *Lun Yu* under a verbal-static perspective

As mentioned earlier, *The Analects* is, first, a text, which is mostly likely for the majority of readers and scholars to take a presupposed verbal-static perspective in terms of logos and cohesion.

Logos, stemming from the Greek word λόγος meaning "a ground", "a plea", "an opinion", "an expectation", "word", "speech", "account", "to reason", (Liddell, 1889), becomes a technical term in philosophy beginning with Heraclitus who uses the term for a principle of order and knowledge. (Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy (2nd ed.): Heraclitus, 1999) Sophists use it to mean discourse and Aristotle takes it as "reasoned discourse" (Rahe, 1994:21) or "the argument" in the field of rhetoric. (Rapp, 2010) To take a great conceptual leap, Stoic philosophers

identifies the term with the divine animating principle pervading the cosmos with a good order. (Boersma, 2014:485-498)

In terms of contemporary cohesion theories, a discourse is supposed to enable the receiver to capture the coherence because it is well formed in both textual cohesions with sufficient signals and semantic coherence. (Enkvist, 1978:128; Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Halliday, 1994: 339)

The *Lun Yu*, judged on the criteria discussed above, is not reasoned, orderly or cohesive at all between entries and chapters although it is of such cases within each entry. In most cases, it seems that two adjacent entries and chapters are semantically irrelevant to each other so that discontinuities in the arrangement of topics and themes are so frequently observed (See Table 1, all the statistic and citation data, hereby, are based on Legge(trans.) (1992)). Topics of morals, learning and politics scatter in the whole book with presences of 234, 35, 55, respectively; and their regroupings of ML, MP, LP, LMP appear 44, 116, 3 and 7 times. And numerous sub-notions present themselves here and there with no fixed frequency to be detected. *The Analects* is, to many surface readers, just like a primitive cosmos made up of numerous floating segmental monologues and dialogues or conversations, separate, groundless, aimless (without specific hearers at most times) and spatio-temporally confusing in which it seems that no law could be found.

Formally, there are no other clear cohesive markers to link each entry and each chapter except for very few cohesive ties such as *Zi yue* (The Master said to the ministers and ordinary people), *Zengzi yue* and *Kongzi duiyue* (The Master said to the kings). Moreover, among all the 492 entries of statements, specific space is stated only 16 times, specific time, 163, specific hearer, 171, respectively, which means the speech contexts are not enough for readers to capture its exact historical meaning.

However, it seems too hasty to jump to a conclusion that the structure of *Lun Yu* is disorderly, thus, dis coherent for the concept of coherence has its own duality.

Coherence is often spoken of as if it were a property of a text; more precisely, though, it concerns what a certain hearer is able to do with the text at a certain time. This allows a single text to cohere for some hearers but not for others, as often happens when there are differences in culture or other background. Alternatively, in the case of a single hearer, it allows a text to fail to cohere at one time but cohere later on, or cohere initially and stop cohering when certain new material is added. (Dooley & Levinsohn, 2008:9)

The duality of coherence suggests that those imaginative readers or hearers might be able to take a shift from a verbal-static view to a visual-dynamic perspective for a clear mental representation of the classic.

3.2 The *Lun Yu* under a visual-dynamic perspective

The visual-dynamic perspective has its theoretical roots in McLuhan's (1962;1964) theory of medium as the message which echoes Nietzsche's words—" [O]ur writing tools are working on our thoughts." (Krystal, 2002: 82–88)

McLuhan (1962:154) argues that new technologies such as alphabets, printing presses, and even speech itself exert a gravitational effect on cognition by visually or aurally homogenizing a certain community's experience based on the principle of "segmentation of actions and functions" and "principle of visual quantification." (McLuhan, 1962:154) For instance, the movie medium's segmenting and quantifying vectors of speed and time actually transforms "the world of sequence and connections into the world of creative configuration and structure," that is, from "lineal connections" to cubic "configurations." (McLuhan, 1964:12)

Then, how are the key notions and statements in the *Lun Yu* visually segmented and quantified by its compilers? And what will this editing bring forth?

Like a wonderful movie having been broken into so many random film clips or a splendid premises having been disassembled into so many tiles and bricks, Confucius' organic thoughts in the *Lun Yu* undergoes a process of disfiguration since it is segmented and quantified into topics of learning morals, and politics with irregular presences of 234, 35, 55, respectively; and their regroupings of ML(moral and learning), MP(moral and politics), LP(learning and politics), LMP (learning, moral and politics) appear 44, 116, 3 and 7 times in the *Lun Yu* (See Table 1).

More specifically, the whole text is saturated with significant concepts with various frequencies. The key notion of *ming* (ordinances of the Heaven) come into the readers' sight at the frequency of 25, *li* (rules of Propriety) of 75, *yan* (speech) of 127. And *ren* (benevolence) runs through the whole classic at a frequency of 109, *zhi* (knowledge and wisdom) of 115, *yong* (courage) of 17; *xiao* (filial piety) of 19, *ti* (fraternity) of 1, *zhong* (loyalty) 18, *xin* (faithfulness) of 38, and *yi* (justice) of 24; *mei* (virtuous or beautiful) of 14 and *e* (evil) of 40. Similarly, "*junzi*" (either as a morally superior man or a socially noble) flashes 107 times here and there while "*xiaoren*" (either as a morally small man or a socially ordinary person) is only mentioned 24 times.

The compilers' adroit visual segmenting and quantifying Confucius' thoughts into many parts scattering here and there in the form of key notions and propositions virtually demands that readers re-erect by themselves the great premises equipped with various layers of notions abstracted and determined by social practice so that they might be quite willing to follow it as an image schema or a paradigm of cultivating oneself into a superior man instead of a small man.

Chapters	Statement types			Topics							
	Space stated	Time stated	Hearer stated	M	L	P	M L	M P	L P	L M P	others
<i>Xue er</i>	0	0	1	4	0	0	5	7	0	0	0
<i>Wei zheng</i>	0	10	10	9	8	0	1	6	0	0	0
<i>Ba yi</i>	2	11	11	3	1	0	3	19	0	0	0
<i>Li ren</i>	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<i>Gongye chang</i>	1	1	9	14	5	0	2	7	0	0	0
<i>Yong ye</i>	2	16	16	11	3	0	5	11	0	0	0
<i>Shu er</i>	3	7	7	16	2	0	16	3	0	0	0
<i>Tai bo</i>	0	3	3	4	1	3	1	10	1	1	0
<i>Zi han</i>	1	7	7	17	1	2	1	2	1	1	6
<i>Xiang dang</i>	0	2	1	16	2	2	0	7	0	0	1
<i>Xian jin</i>	0	14	14	17	3	1	0	0	1	3	1
<i>Han yuan</i>	1	16	16	7	0	3	1	10	0	0	3
<i>Zi lu</i>	0	15	15	6	0	13	0	9	0	1	1
<i>Xian wen</i>	1	22	22	22	1	13	2	5	0	0	1
<i>Weiling Gong</i>	1	9	9	28	4	5	1	3	0	1	0
<i>Ji shi</i>	0	3	3	8	1	4	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Yang huo</i>	3	10	10	15	1	2	2	4	0	0	2
<i>Wei zi</i>	1	8	8	1	0	6	0	4	0	0	0
<i>Zi zhang</i>	0	7	7	12	2	1	4	3	0	0	2
<i>Yao yue</i>	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0

Total	16	163	171	234	35	55	44	116	3	7	17
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Table 1 Statement types and numbers of topics

Notes: M=morals; L=learning; P=politics

At the macro level, the compilers inspire readers to discover visually three conventional points which often appear in the form of introductory remarks in modern writings:

1) What to be learnt in the Lun Yu and why

All the notions related to ordinances, rules of propriety, and speech forces should be learnt and digested thoroughly. Anyone who wants to be a superior man rather than a small man needs to read *The Analects*.

The two points above is witnessed in Entry 20.3, which goes as follows:

The Master said, “Without knowing the ordinances of *Heaven*, it is impossible to be a superior man. Without an acquaintance with the rules of Propriety, it is impossible for the character to be established. Without knowing *the force of* words, it is impossible to know men.”(trans. by Legge, 1993:257)

2) How to learn The Analects

According to Entry 1.1, it is “pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application.” (trans. by Legge, 1993:65) Of course, it demands deep thinking because “[L]earning without thought is labour lost” and “thought without learning is perilous.” (trans. by Legge, 1993:75)

3) How the order of topics is arranged

The surface trinity is the order of topics does not go in a linear way but in a circular way with no starting nor ending with numerous blanks between the topics of learning, moral cultivation and family and state governing. (See **Table 1** and **Fig. 1**)

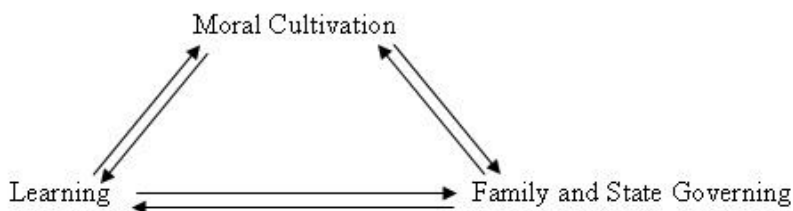


Fig.1 Surface Trinity of Topic Circular Movement

At the micro level, The Analects encourages readers to re-sketch the notion tree of a junzi. (See Fig. 2)

The stem notion of *Junzi* branches out *Ren*(Benevolence), *Yi*(Sense of Justice), *Zhi*(Wisdom) and *Yong*(Courage), among which *Ren* is the very core. While *Zhi*(Wisdom) twigs off *Ming*(Ordinance of the Heaven), *Li*(Rules of Propriety) and *Yan*(Speech Forces)(Entry 20.3,p257), *Ren* gives a birth to its innate essence and approaches applied when being alone and when contacting with others, of which the latter nourishes *Xiao*(Filial Piety), *Ti*(Fraternity), *Zhong*(Faithfulness) and *Shu*(Putting one's foot into others' shoes). And a luxuriant leaf of *Xin*(Trustfulness) buds out from *Zhong*(Faithfulness). Namely, *Ren* functions not only as a self-conscious requirement on one's own personality and learning and on the responsibility for others but as an approach for one's whole life.(Xu, 2014:85)

Ren's nature — “to love all men” (Entry 12.22) (trans. by Legge, 1993:175), — could be gained by two approaches. When being alone, a *junzi* should take a grave attitude (Entry 1.8,p67), be “cautious and slow in his speech,”(Entry 12.3,p167) and prudent in his actions,(Entry1.14,p69), have the sense of justice (Entry4.16) and ordinance of the Heaven(Entry 20.3,p257) subdue one's self and return to propriety”(Entry 12.1, p167),turn “the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent consideration”(Entry 6.22, p113) , and be able to differentiate “*mei*”(virtue and beauty) (Entry 1.12, 3.25,12.16) from “*e*” (evil) or “*wu*” (taking as evil). (Entry 12.16,12.23, 13.24,17.18)

Only in this way, can a *Junzi* have “no anxiety nor fear,”(Entry 12.4, p167)be “satisfied and composed,”(Entry 7.37, p125) be willing to “sacrifice” his life for his

virtue(Entry 15.9, p207) with firmness, endurance, simplicity and modesty,(Entry 13.27,p187) “rest in virtue”(Entry 4.2, p89) in stead of pursuing delicious food and comfort dwelling(Entry1.14, p69), and “find pleasures in hills.”(Entry 6.23,p113)

When contacting with others, a person should firmly practice *zhong*, *shu*, *xiao* and *ti*.

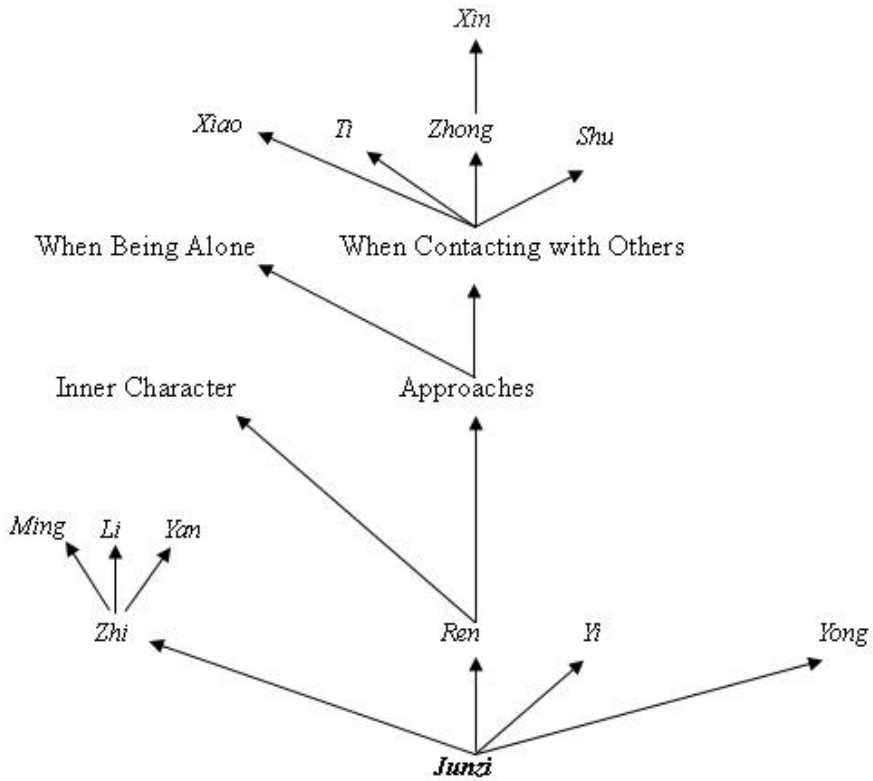


Fig. 2 The Visualized Notion Tree of Junzi

According to Yao(2004:117), *zhong* appears 18 times with two layers of meanings. The first means faithfulness or trustfulness. As an official, he should “keep its affairs before the mind without weariness,” and “practice them with undeviating consistency.”(Entry 12.14, p171) As a friend, he must be faithful when “transacting business for others.”(Entry 1.4, p65). The second means loyalty witnessed in Entry 3.19 that “ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness.”(p83)

Xin(sincerity) is a derivative word often used together with *Zhong*(faithfulness) by Confucius and his disciples. Holding “faithfulness and sincerity as first principles” “towards what is right” is “the way to exalt one’s virtue.”(Entry 12.10, p171) The difference between the two notions is that *Xin* is the quality of speeches targeting at others (“his words are sincere” in making friends, (Entry 1.7, p67))while *Zhong* is the quality of one’s inner heart targeting at either a person himself or others.

Shu is a principle to put oneself into other’s position. In this sense, a *junzi* should seek to “establish others” when “wishing to be established himself.”(Entry 6.30, p115) and ought “not to do to others as” he “would not wish done to himself.” (Entry 12.2, p167)

Xiao and *Ti* are the essence of *Ren*. In the words of the philosopher You, “[F]ilial piety and fraternal submission” are “the root of all benevolence.”(Entry 1.2, p65) What a man entitled to be called an officer, for instance, involves many qualities, among which he must be a man “whom the circles of his relatives pronounce to be filial, whom his fellow villagers and neighbours pronounce to be fraternal”(Entry 13.20, p183) so that there would be the least disobedience in a state.(Entry 1.2, p65)

Why could a notion tree of being a *junzi* be visualized and replanted like this? First and foremost, Confucius’ idea about *Junzi* is systematic, without which nothing could be re-sketches. Second, it is closely connected with reading approaches and effects. It would be, however, too weak and vague to claim that re-sketching is based on adequate reading and understanding of the whole classic.

In Section 3.2, the author has discussed the compilers’ visual segmentation and quantification of Confucius’s ideas in terms of McLuhan’s theory medium communication, and now it is time to study those cognitive regrouping motivations for re-sketching the *Lun Yu*.

3.3 Cognitive regrouping motivation for re-sketching the *Lun Yu*

Actually, a reader’s clear mental representations could be constructed by filtering out those irrelevant segmented notions and statements and then filling in the blanks with his own understanding and interpretations when the whole closure is necessary.

This kind of reading has its roots in unconscious categorization. Related cognitive research indicates that similarity/proximity cognition is the most fundamental way for human beings to know the world. (Solso, MacLin & MacLin, 2004/2005, pp. 78-80) According to the Gestalt psychological theories, people tend to organize visual elements into groups or *unified wholes* when certain principles are applied *spontaneously*¹.

1) Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern (Fig. 3). Unity occurs because the triangular shapes at the bottom of the eagle symbol look similar to the shapes that form the sunburst.

2) Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group. Fig. 4 composed of fifteen segmented figures of a dancer below, actually, form a unified whole (the shape of a tree) because of their proximity.

1 Diagrams taken from

<http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>,
retrieved Feb. 26, 2016.



Fig. 3

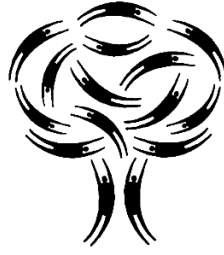


Fig. 4

3) Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object (Fig. 5). The eye is compelled to move to the right to perceive the leaf.



Fig. 5

Based on these principles, it is easy for readers to get a dotted line of the concept of *Junzi* at the first thorough reading. If the entries without discussing *Junzi* are marked as ● and those discussing it as ○, then some statements with the notion will automatically gather together out of similarity and proximity. And the previous set of similarities or proximities of the properties of *Junzi* will lead to a focus continuation of seeking for more similar or proximate information, in which all irrelevant statements are neglected so that a condensation occurs, to take for example the cognitive line of *Junzi* in Chapter I (Fig.6).

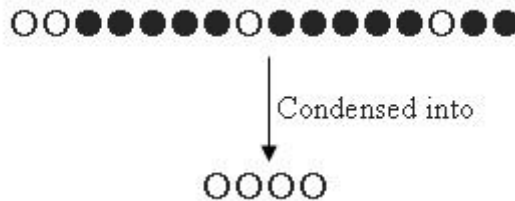


Fig. 6 Condensation of dotted line of *Junzi* in Chapter I

To be more specific, four explicit definitions of *Junzi* are filtered out of sixteen entries in Chapter 1:

Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him? (Entry 1.1, p65)...

The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission!—Are they not the root of all benevolent actions?(Entry 1.2, p65)...

If the scholar (*junzi*, noted by the author) be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration and his learning will not be solid. Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles. Having no friends not equal to yourself. When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them. (Entry 1.8, p67)...

He who aims to be a man of complete virtue, in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite, nor in his dwelling-place does he seek the appliances of ease; he is earnest in what he is doing, and careful in his speech; he frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified: such a person may be said indeed love to learn.
(Entry 1.14, p69)

Entry 1.2 directly tells readers the nature of being a *junzi* is to practice filial piety (*xiao*) and fraternity(*ti*) which is the essence of benevolence(*ren*), and Entry 14 tells how to be a *junzi* in terms of pursuit of principles to rectify oneself ,of avoidance from just gratifying his appetite and ease with food and dwellings, of earnest actions and prudent speeches. While Entry 1.1 openly talks about a *junzi*'s right reaction to others' failure to notice him, Entry 1.8 frankly warns of what a *junzi* is going to face when he fails to respect himself. To sum it up, Chapter 1 *Xue Er* (Of Learning)tells readers explicitly about the nature, pursuit, manners of being a *junzi* and failure consequences.

Chapter 2 *Wei Zheng*(Administration), however, defines *Junzi* (a ruler based on a virtuous man) both explicitly and implicitly. The explicit citations could be found in Entry 2.12, 2.13, 2.14 and 2.18 while all other entries implicitly(without mentioning *Junzi*) tells readers how to learn (Entry 2.11, 2.15, 2.18) to be a *Junzi* by practicing *De* (virtues) (Entry 2.1, 2.3, 2.21) including *Xiao*(filial piety) and *Ti*(fraternity) (Entry 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.20, 2.21), *Zhong*(faithfulness) and *Xin* (sincerity) (Entry 2.20, 2.22, 2.23), *Li*(propriety) and *Yi* (sense of justice) (Entry 2.23, 2.24), *Zhi/Zheng* (right) and *Wang/Xie* (wrong) (Entry 2.2, 2.19), all of which would be meaningless without *Yong*(mettle) in one's actions (Entry 2.24) and *Shen*(prudence) in speeches(Entry 2.18).

Threading all the similar visual lines in the other eighteen chapters, the author finds a complete line of *Junzi* discussed by Confucius and his disciples with all the statements on *Junzi* foregrounded and others backgrounded (See Fig. 7). Of course, it is far from enough to grasp its essence by reading just once, esp. when the *Lun Yu* has been segmented and quantified in such a random way. Therefore, a second, third and more reading are often performed with numerous circles overlapping with each other.



Fig.7 Cognitive circle of Junzi

Likewise, similar visual reunifications of those sub-notions of Zhi, Ren, Yi and Li occur so that a coherent, more or less, mental representation of Junzi grows out as a notion tree (see Fig. 8, Fig.9 and Fig.10).

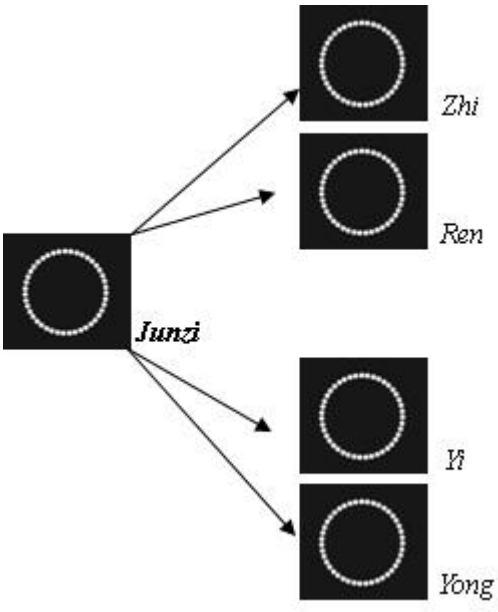


Fig.8 Cognitive Process of How to be a Junzi

Ren is subdivided into circles of *Zhong* and *Shu*, *Xiao* and *Ti*, (see Fig. 9), in which the latter two (both applied in families and states) stem from the former (one's inner heart).

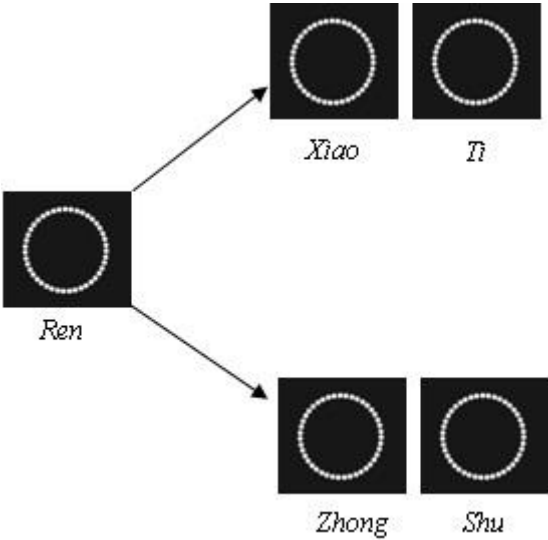


Fig.9 Cognitive Subdivision of Ren

And *Zhi* (Wisdom/Knowledge) is subdivided into *Tianming* (ordinance of the Heaven), *Li*(Propriety) and *Yan*(Speeches)(See Fig.10).

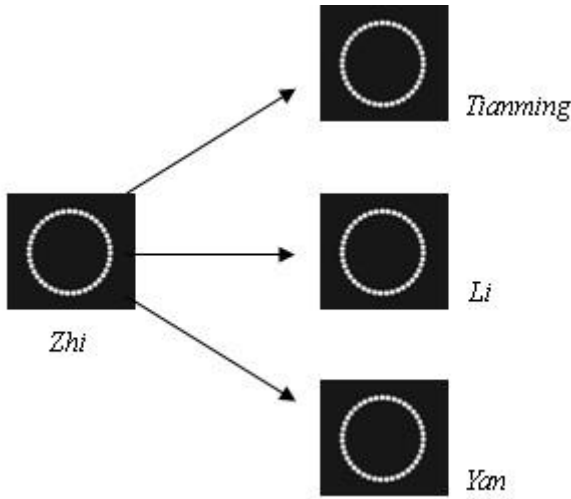


Fig.10 Cognitive Subdivision of Zhi

Virtually, an indefinite further reading of the *Lun Yu* is just a constant process of recomposing a structure of *Jun Zi* with various rotations of those key notions. And each rotation is just

Like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel//Never ending or beginning on an ever-spinning reel//Like a snowball down a mountain, or a carnival balloon//Like a carousel that's turning, running rings around the moon//Like a clock whose hands are sweeping, past the minutes of its face//...//Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your mind//...(Bergman & Bergman, 1968)

The more you read *The Analects*, the more crystallized rotations you will get from the primitive cosmos. Although it looks “impalpable and incommensurable, shadowy and dim,” “[Y]et latent in it are forms”, “entities” with “a force that though rarefied is none the less efficacious.” (Lao Zi 1992:47) With those forms and entities getting more and more clear and orderly, the force becomes faster and stronger with readings going deeper and broader.

Of course, not every notion is equally stressed and defined in the *Lun Yu*, which leaves a large space for scholars in the latter generations to offer various annotations and interpretations to enrich Confucius' primitive thoughts.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

It is quite intriguing that the *Lun Yu* was segmented and quantified in such a seemingly disorderly way. Ideologically, harmony and order are the ultimate aim for Confucians to pursue. Methodologically, it is essential for them to take the Golden Mean instead of going to the

extreme. Practically in writing and editing, Confucius has set a very good example by classifying all the poems in *Book of Songs* into *feng*(airs of the states), *ya*(hymns) and *song*(eulogies) and by listing the historical events in *Spring and Autumn* in a chronological order.

In any sense, disorderliness is certainly not what the Confucian compilers want.

Therefore, the wise compilers might just play a historic joke with all the readers in an unconventional way of segmenting and quantifying Confucius' systemic thoughts into a pile of bricks and tiles in the stream of consciousness, which invites creative readers to rebuild the TEMPLE well-designed by the Master.

Such a reverse thinking is full of wits, by which *The Analects* becomes more visual than verbal, more generative than analytic, more divergent than convergent, more lateral than vertical, more suspended than fixed, more diffuse than focused, more subjective than objective, more associative than linear, and more creative than reasoning. It leaves considerable space for later generations to imagine and interpret. Therefore, the interpretations to *The Analects* is of "yes and" rather than "yes but", to borrow Harris'(1998) words. That's the pragmatic reason why generations and generations of Confucians and scholars have never stopped their steps to read, perceive, visualize, digest and interpret the great work. Besides those annotations and interpretations, moreover, there is "a body of questions" on "the quality and nature of sagehood as exemplified by Confucius" (Makeham, 2003:6):

Was Confucius born a sage? Did he need to learn, or was he innately endowed with knowledge? Are there fixed grades of human nature? If so, can these grades be modified? Can worthies become sages? Can ordinary people changes their natures and learn to be sages? Is human nature good or bad, or are these terms inapplicable to the nature? Why was Confucius not recognized as a sage in his own lifetime? Why was his social position in commensurate with his cosmological standing? Why did heaven not intervene on Confucius' behalf? Why did heaven frustrate his aspiration for office? Can the meaning of the sage's teaching be conveyed in writing and if so, how? (Makeham, 2003:6)

It is those questions, annotations and interpretations generated from the seemingly chaotic yet innately subtle designing of *The Analects of Confucius* that make the genes of the classics descend and mutate through generations and generations.

In this way, those off-springs constitute *The Analects* into an ethical, political, philosophical and even aesthetical (Ye,1985: 130-131; Zong,1981:68)Conversation, to borrow Gee's (2000:13) words, with "long-running and important themes and motifs that have been the focus of a variety of different texts and interactions (in different social languages and Discourses) through a significant stretch of time and across an array of institutions."

Ultimately, this historic Conversation with Taoism and Buddhism homogenizes Chinese ancient culture which is to shape contemporary China at the age of Internet.

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